



Hall



Howard

Evangelist Is Afraid Of Garrison's 'Hook'

Entertainer Views Iowa As a Shield

But Beckham Says 'Nothing to Hide'

By David Thompson

An evangelist who moonlights with country-western songs outside the pulpit believes that by moving to Iowa he may have avoided a summons to testify in New Orleans District Attorney Jim Garrison's investigation of an alleged conspiracy to assassinate President Kennedy.

Thomas Edward Beckham, 27, who uses the name Mark Evans as an entertainer, said he knew nothing about the assassination.

Mr. Garrison subpoenaed Mr. Beckham and the two other men as material witnesses, saying they were "in a unique position to observe activities relevant to the assassination."

Mr. Beckham, who says he is a bishop in the Universal Life Church, said in an interview in his former residence at 5314 North Forty-eighth Street, that he moved to Iowa "recently."

Not in Pact

He declined to say where or when he became an Iowa resident.

Iowa is not a party to an interstate pact providing for the free exchange of material witnesses in major criminal cases, Nebraska and Louisiana are both signees.

A New Orleans judge Friday issued a subpoena ordering Mr. Beckham to appear before an Orleans Parish (New Orleans) grand jury February 1 and 2. Also subpoenaed were Loran A. Hall of Kernville, Cal., and Lawrence J. Howard, Jr., of Los Angeles.

Another former Omaha man sought in the investigation last year, Mrs. Lillie McMaines, also eluded testifying by moving to Des Moines.

"I understand that you can't extradite from Iowa," said Mr. Beckham, who said he works as an evangelist, institutional psychologist and entertainer.

'Not Hiding'

"I know that if I'm ever brought back (to New Orleans), I'll be hooked for something," said Mr. Beckham.

"I'm not hiding nothing, and I don't know nothing about the case," he said. "All I know is that President Kennedy was assassinated."

He said he does not know Edgar Eugene Bradley of North Hollywood, Cal., who was indicted Wednesday for conspiracy in the death of President Kennedy in Dallas.

Mr. Beckham also said he did not think he knew either Mr. Hall or Mr. Howard.

He said he has visited Dallas only once, in 1966.

He said he did meet one man whom Garrison had linked to the alleged assassination plot, David Ferrie, a pilot, who died February 22, 1967.

Mr. Beckham met Mr. Ferrie in "late 1961 or early 1962" while "tagging along" with



Beckham . . . Documents on wall are "degrees."
—World-Herald Photo by S. J. Meltingaglio.

Evangelist Views Iowa as Haven

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Jack S. Martin, Sr., a private investigator. The meeting lasted about 10 minutes, and it was on business of Mr. Martin, whom Mr. Beckham described as "a hatchet man for Jim Garrison."

However, he warned that if he should testify in New Orleans, he would use what he called his "ace in the hole" that would incriminate both Mr. Garrison and Mr. Martin in matters not related to the conspiracy probe.

Mr. Beckham said he never met Lee Harvey Oswald, the man named by the Warren Commission as the assassin of President Kennedy.

"I know Jim Garrison real well, and everybody in his office, and what I want to know is, why don't they pick up Jack Martin? He's the one who knows everybody involved in the case."

Worked as Investigator

Mr. Beckham, who said he lived in Louisiana until late 1962, said he worked as an investigator for Mr. Garrison's office for about three months, but there is no record of it, because he was paid in cash, not by check.

An assistant in Mr. Garrison's office, James Alcock, disputed the claim, however, saying: "I'd never heard of the man until his name came up in this investigation. I can swear that he never was an investigator with us."

Mr. Alcock also told The World-Herald that Mr. Beckham's assertion that Jack Martin was a "hatchet for (Mr.) Garrison" was unfounded.

"He (Mr. Martin) was a private investigator of some sort but he certainly never worked for or with us," said Mr. Alcock.

Mr. Beckham said:

"If the D.A. was sincere, why doesn't he have me investigated here? If I went back to New Orleans, there are a dozen charges they could trump up against me."

Offer Questioned

Mr. Beckham scoffed at any offer of immunity from arrest or anything happening prior to the entry of Messrs. Beckham, Hall and Howard into Louisiana. The offer was contained in subpoena documents.

"How can a man who's supposed to prosecute the law provide protection from it?" he said.



Publicity photo of "Mark Evans" . . . He's billed as "America's most controversial entertainer."

Mr. Beckham, who has lived in Nebraska about two years, said he was arrested twice in New Orleans, once for running a lottery in a church on North Rampart Street, and another time for investigation.

He said he visited Dallas, site of the assassination, about six months ago with Dr. F. Lee Crisman of Tacoma, Wash., with whom he works as a psychologist. Dr. Crisman manages Mr. Beckham's entertainment tours.

Promotion Trip

Mr. Beckham has made recordings for Capitol Records and sings mostly country-western music. The trip with Dr. Crisman was part of a record promotion trip, he said.

Mr. Beckham gave a reporter a copy of the record "It's Love," which he said he made for Tab Records, a Capitol subsidiary.

Mr. Beckham said he receives little or no pay for his church work and earns his income from entertaining and from work as a "counseling and industrial psychologist."

Documents Shown

He said he was ordained a priest in the Old Orthodox Catholic Church of North America in October, 1962, but left that organization after "trouble" following his arrest for investigation in New Orleans.

He showed documents that state he received a "bachelor of theology degree" from Faith Bible College and Theological Seminary, Fort Lauderdale, Fla., in June, 1964, a "master of church education" from the same school on May 10, 1967 and a "doctor of psychology" from the school on June 1, 1967.

Others are "doctor of philosophy" from the National Institute of Criminology and a "law degree" from the Blackstone School of Law, a correspondence school.

Services of the Omaha church in which Mr. Beckham serves now are held in garages of the members, he said. The church formerly was at 1727 Leavenworth Street and is for rent.

Linked With Ruby

The subpoena for Mr. Hall said Mr. Garrison had information that Mr. Hall checked into the Dallas YMCA in October, 1963, and remained in Dallas until the time of Mr. Kennedy's death there on November 22, 1963.

The subpoena contended that Mr. Hall was in Dallas with Jack Ruby "and other individuals believed to be involved in the assassination," including Lee Harvey Oswald.

Ruby, now dead, shot Oswald to death at the Dallas jail in November, 1963.

Mr. Garrison contended in the document that Mr. Hall was active in the "Free Cuba" movement in Florida, Louisiana and Texas and that "he was previously engaged in CIA-sponsored guerrilla training in Florida for raids on Cuba."

'Seen in Dallas'

The subpoena continued that Mr. Hall, while in New Orleans, associated with Mr. Ferrie, who was a target of Mr. Garrison's controversial probe. It said Mr. Hall was present at discussions concerning the assassination.

Mr. Beckham, his subpoena said, associated with Mr. Ferrie in New Orleans during 1963 and both were ordained priests in the "Old Orthodox Catholic Church of North America."

The Beckham subpoena said he was also reported to have been seen in Dallas in November, 1963, with a number of persons "believed to have played a part in the assassination of President Kennedy."

The subpoena for Mr. Howard said Mr. Garrison has information that Mr. Howard was with Mr. Ferrie in 1963 during visits to New Orleans.

The document also says Mr. Howard arrived in Dallas in

October, 1963, checked into the YMCA and remained in Dallas until the time of the assassination. It says he was in contact with Ruby "and other individuals believed to have been involved in the assassination," including Oswald.

Hall Wants To Testify

From World-Herald Press Services.

In California, Loran E. (Skip) Hall said from his home in Kernville, that he will go to New Orleans; United Press International said.

Informed that he has been named in the investigation, he told the Associated Press: "You're kiddin'!" Mr. Hall is a bartender in Woodford Heights, 125 miles northeast of Los Angeles, the AP reported.

"I'm going to go to New Orleans," he is quoted as saying by UPI. "I'm going to make them extradite me, but I'm going to go, because I think it's time the American people found out the whole truth about the Kennedy assassination."

"If I can be of any help, I'd like to help."

But he denied a charge that he knew other figures in the Garrison investigation.

"The only thing I have to say is that these charges are absolutely false," Mr. Hall said, sitting in the living room of his mountain home. "I have never known, conversed or corresponded with any of these men—Ruby, Oswald, Shaw, Beckham, or any of the others."

Mr. Hall said he participated for several years in guerrilla warfare in Cuba and later raids against Fidel Castro's Government. He said he was a member of Mr. Castro's July 26th Movement in 1953 and early 1959, but then joined an anti-Castro organization called "La Sombra" after learning Mr. Castro was a Communist.

Mr. Hall was arrested and jailed in Cuba, but said he was released after a man he described as his superior in La Sombra arranged for him to fly to the United States.

Between that time and 1963, Mr. Hall said, he was engaged in collecting weapons—"everything from automatic weapons to 37 millimeter cannons"—and medical supplies for raids on Cuba. These raids lasted, he said, until he was arrested in Florida in September, 1963.

He also was arrested in Dallas the following month, he said, for possession of dangerous drugs.

Evangelist Impressed Landlords

By Ken Zimmerman

Mark Evans is a nightclub entertainer; Thomas E. Beckman is, he says, a bishop of the Universal Life Churches of America.

The two names are both used by a man, recently of Omaha, who was subpoenaed Friday by New Orleans District Attorney Jim Garrison as a witness in an investigation covering an alleged conspiracy to assassinate President Kennedy November 22, 1963.

"It was a real shock to me," said Mrs. Burd Yager when she learned of the New Orleans action.

Mrs. Yager and her husband manage a building at 1727 Leavenworth Street where Mr. Beckham conducted Sunday church services until shortly before Christmas.

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Polished

She described Mr. Beckham as a "real polished fellow who seemed to know quite a bit about everything."

She said he first came to the place last spring and

rented the corner store as a "thrift shop" where used merchandise was sold.

"He wasn't making a go of it," Mrs. Yager said, "and he asked us if he could put in a church. That seemed like a fine thing and we let him stay there and didn't charge him any rent."

"The neighborhood needed a church," she said.

She said Mr. Beckham's "congregation" was "never more than a half a dozen people. They were folks who live near by."

* * *

New Address

A sign in the window now states that the church has been moved to 5314 North Forty-eighth Street and that transportation will be furnished "members here every Sunday."

The Forty-eighth Street address is that most recently used as Mr. Beckham's home. He was interviewed there Friday by a World-Herald reporter.

In addition to his religious work and night club entertaining, Mr. Beckham

claims to be an "institutional psychologist."

He has marketed a mail-order course in "drugless therapeutics." It is published under the name of the American Academy of Professional Arts.

Mr. Yager said he was given a free copy of the "course."

He said he was also made an "honorary attorney general" in Louisiana "through Dr. Beckham's influential contacts in New Orleans."

He described the handsome Southerner as "very personable, soft-spoken and cultured."

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Pilot, Too

"He's a pilot, too," Mrs. Yager said. "In fact, I think he's done just about everything—at least he says he has."

She said he had seen his engraved diplomas and documents.

"He's real sharp," she said. "In fact, I think he's one of the smartest men I ever met."